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The Forest Service Roles in Outdoor Recreation



Forest Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

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*An extension of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources
Planning Act (RPA) Recommended Program.*

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The Forest Service Recreation Perspective

The National Forest System encompasses 187 million acres that contain natural resources representing some of the Nation's greatest assets. The *Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960* identified recreation as one of the five principal resources of the National Forest System for which the Secretary of Agriculture is responsible. Each acre of the National Forest System has recreation potential. This potential is considered when planning or executing resources management programs.

In 1974, Congress enacted the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA), which directed the Secretary of Agriculture to periodically assess the Nation's forest and rangeland resources and to submit, at regular intervals, recommended long-range Forest Service programs.

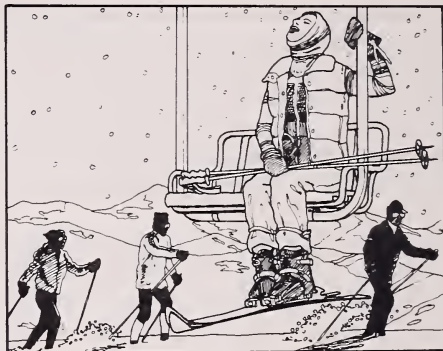
The first program, submitted in 1975, recommended increasing the supply of outdoor recreation opportunities and services through Forest Service programs that emphasize dispersed recreation — forest and rangeland oriented outdoor recreation that occurs outside of sites developed or managed to concentrate recreation use. Under this program dispersed recreation would increase in the next two decades. The program also calls for the Forest Service to maintain its share of developed or concentrated site recreation.

In meeting its forest recreation responsibilities, the Forest Service coordinates with the private sector and Government agencies to ensure that there is no unwarranted duplication of efforts and that programs are complementary. Where appropriate, as determined through joint land use planning, National Forest System recreation resources are used to complement opportunities on other public lands. Where economically feasible, the private sector is encouraged to develop and maintain, on National Forest System lands, needed public recreation facilities provided the long-term public interest is protected.

Roles in Outdoor Recreation

Cooperation

The Forest Service cooperates with private interests, local and State governments, and Federal agencies by sharing its knowledge, resources, and capabilities.



Land Planning and Management

The Forest Service develops, administers, and protects National Forest System lands in a manner that produces opportunities for quality recreation experiences and related services in conjunction with the provision of other goods and services.



Research and Information

The Forest Service conducts research to aid effective recreation management on all forest and rangelands and provides information that enhances the National Forest visitors' experiences.



The Forest Service Roles in Outdoor Recreation

Cooperation — the Forest Service shares its knowledge, resources, and capabilities with public entities and the private sector.

POLICY

- Cooperate with private interests, local and State governments, and Federal agencies to make outdoor recreation opportunities for the American people as effective and available as possible.
- Coordinate Forest Service activities with other Federal, State, and local and private recreational entities to avoid duplication of efforts.
- Ensure that Forest Service recreational programs are complementary with other public and private programs.
- Rely on the private sector and local governments to provide, on lands under their jurisdiction, developments such as playfields, swimming pools, golf courses, race tracks, and tennis courts needed to meet local, State, or regional demands.
- Implement and support programs that reduce unemployment and introduce the disadvantaged to recreation experiences.
- Provide opportunities for volunteer services.
- Cooperate with appropriate agencies to assure prompt mobilization of local agencies, organizations, and individuals in meeting emergency search and rescue situations, and take action to protect life and property in the interim between notification and mobilization.
- Ensure an acceptable level of security for visitors to the National Forests—primarily through local law enforcement.
- Evaluate outstanding cultural and historical sites to determine if preservation, restoration, and interpretation is indicated.
- Provide State and private forestry recreation technical assistance to private forest landowners who are interested in providing nonincome producing recreation opportunities.
- Encourage private sector development and operation of public recreational facilities adjacent to and compatible with National Forest System management. Support these endeavors with complementary recreation development, such as trails, on the National Forest System land.



- Develop or permit on the National Forest System lands overnight and related facilities needed to accommodate visitors to nearby, but off-Forest, attractions if cooperative land management planning indicates these lands offer the best opportunity.
- Participate actively in development of State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORP) and recreation elements of county comprehensive plans.
- Assist the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation as it develops and maintains the Nationwide Outdoor Recreation Plan.
- Encourage interpretive, historical, and other associations to assist in interpretation of National Forest System resources through cooperative agreements and employee participation.

Land Planning and Management — assures that the National Forest System lands provide a variety of appropriate opportunities for outdoor recreation.

POLICY

- Emphasize an attitude of service to people.
- Provide recreation opportunities within the National Forest units of the Wilderness System without impairing the basic resource.
- Maintain a natural setting at camp and picnic sites.
- Evaluate and manage recreation scenic values along National Forest System roads and highways.
- Develop and maintain a system of road access and rights-of-way that provide a mixture of scenic and recreation opportunities.
- Limit regulations, constraints, and supervision of recreation use to the minimum necessary for resource protection, visitor satisfaction, and safety.
- Maintain trail uses for all—including the handicapped.
- Inventory and protect cultural history resources on National Forest System lands.



- Work with State wildlife departments to ensure sustained and diversified fish and wildlife populations to enhance recreation experiences.

- Coordinate land management and recreation planning within and adjacent to the boundaries of the National Forests with public agencies and neighboring private landowners.

- Direct Forest Service funded recreation development primarily toward those activities that are not potential profit-earning ventures for the private sector.

- Avoid Forest Service financing of facilities where existing or planned private developments are capable of meeting public needs.

- Endeavor to attract and assist private entrepreneurs in the provision of needed recreation facilities and opportunities on National Forest System lands.

- Provide day use and overnight facilities needed by through travelers on National Forest System lands if other suitable lands are not available.

- Utilize environmental education, visitor information, facility location, and site design to reduce user conflicts and resource damage.

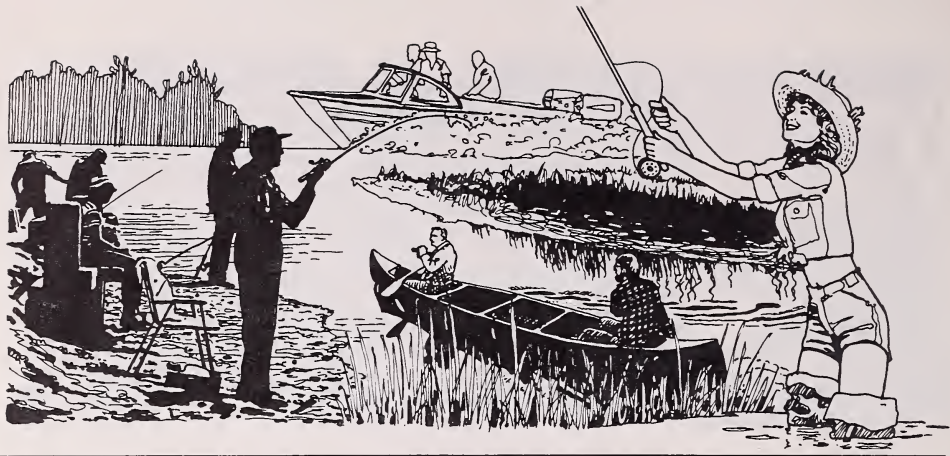
- Promote forest and rangeland recreation opportunities to meet the special needs of the disadvantaged.

- Develop and maintain camping sites suitable for groups—including the disadvantaged—and work with private interests, State and local government, and other Federal agencies in promoting their use.

- Identify and recommend to Congress lands needed to complete the National Forest portion of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

- Integrate landscape management techniques into all forest management activities to attain the best visual quality commensurate with cost and other needed land uses.

- Initiate a pilot program for the development of simple, permanent organization camps through special use permits on National Forest System lands to be used to bring youth, older Americans, and the disadvantaged to the forest recreation resources and to provide bases for environmental education.



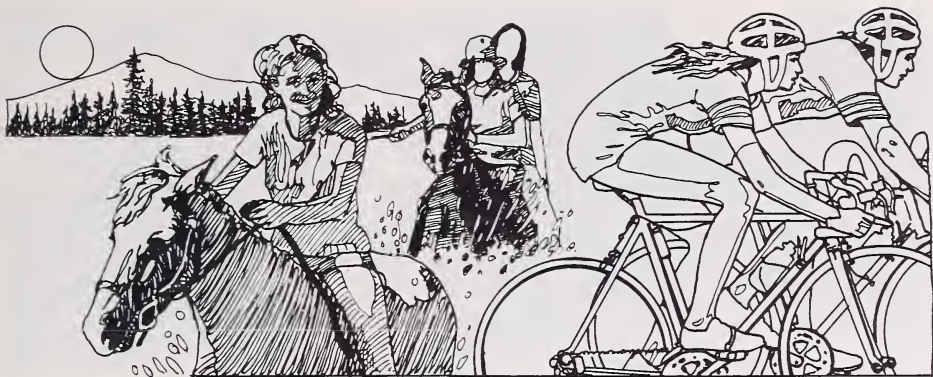
- Encourage full utilization of all existing special use organization camps, with emphasis on providing for environmental education experiences for all.

- Promote public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the scenic and recreational values of the National Forest System by identifying trails through land management planning suitable for establishment as National Recreation Trails.

- Give special emphasis to the protection and management of National Forest System areas and trails that have been given special designation—such as National Recreation Areas, Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and National Scenic and Recreation Trails.

- Where concessioner operation is in the public interest, but profit potential is inadequate, Government funds may be used to develop supporting facilities, such as access, boat ramps, and parking lots.

- Use Land Management Planning Area Guides to help assess recreation needs and to help determine ways of coordinating Federal, State, and local efforts.



Research and Information — assures that the Forest Service conducts needed research to aid effective recreation management on all forest and rangelands and provides information to enhance the National Forest visitors' experiences.

POLICY

- Conduct research to obtain, and effectively transfer, knowledge necessary to improve the management of public and private forest and rangeland recreation opportunities, and wilderness.
- Develop methods, through research, to forecast future recreation demand.
- Continue research to improve ways to preserve the natural environment necessary to integrate forest recreation supply and demand, and to develop methods to coordinate the supply and demand with the production of other forest benefits.
- Provide, where practical, information on the degree of hazard involved in specific high-adventure recreation activities.
- Emphasize Visitor Information Service (VIS) activities.
- Provide information to assist the users in choosing the opportunities they wish to participate in and help them plan for that chosen activity.
- Interpret forest and rangeland environments and man's relationship to them.
- Provide opportunities for interpretation and viewing of wildlife where visitor impacts on wildlife and their life support system are not critical.
- Identify demonstration areas offering a significant spectrum of recreation. These areas will be used to demonstrate quality recreation management and services, apply and test research findings, demonstrate proven principles and practices of recreation management, and offer a variety of training opportunities.
- Demonstrate the recreation potential of private rangelands through development and management of recreation opportunities on the National Grasslands.



- Cooperate with other agencies and the private sector to implement early use of research technology.
- Cooperate with educational institutions or historical societies whenever possible to make cultural history resources available for public enjoyment and education where consistent with protection needs.
- Explore ways to inventory, maintain, protect, and augment opportunities for use of forest recreation environments.
- Recruit new employees with a background of behavioral science and natural resource skills.
- Develop and implement continuing educational programs that will bring behavioral science skills to all employees in recreation management.
- Conduct and support cooperative long-term research in visual resource analysis methods and in ways of measuring public perceptivity and sensitivity to visual change.



The following charts graphically depict the "Supply Roles of Recreation Entities" and "Priorities for Recreation Efforts by the Forest Service." These charts are intended to encourage recreation entities (especially those in the private sector) to enter the field where there are gaps, and prevent duplication of facilities and services where the field is already overcrowded.

Supply Roles of Recreation Entities

Areas, Facilities, and Activities	Forest Service	Bureau of Land Management	National Park Service	Fish and Wildlife Corps of Engineers	Tennessee Valley Authority	Bureau of Reclamation	State Government	Local Government	Private Individuals
Wilderness Hiking, boating, camping, fishing, hunting, etc.	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○
Wild and Scenic Rivers Hunting, hiking, fishing, boating, etc.	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
National Recreation Areas Full spectrum of activities	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Backcountry, roadless, scenic, and dispersed recreation areas Nordic skiing, boating, hiking, wood gathering, berrying, etc.	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Driving for pleasure	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Facilities for dispersed area use Camping, boating, nature study, hunting, fishing, etc.	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Trails Hiking, horseback riding, bicycling, Nordic skiing	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hunting and fishing	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Supply Roles
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Driving for pleasure										
Facilities for dispersed area use Camping, boating, nature study, hunting, fishing, etc.										
Trails Hiking, horseback riding, bicycling, Nordic skiing										
Hunting and fishing										
Alpine skiing										
Interpretation of natural resources										
Interpretation of cultural resources										
Off-road vehicle facilities and activities Snowmobiling, motor biking, four-wheel driving										
Organization camps Camping, nature study, using dispersed areas										
Destination campgrounds Camping, swimming, boating										
Facilities for day use sites Swimming, boating, nature study, picnicking, outdoor cooking										
Destination campgrounds for external attractions										
Campgrounds for through travelers										
Urban recreation facilities										

Key:



Very high



High



Medium



Low



Very low

Priorities for Recreation Efforts by the Forest Service

Areas, Facilities, and Activities	Allocation of National Forest lands, operation, development, maintenance				Research				Cooperative advice on National Forest lands			
Wilderness Hiking, boating, camping, fishing, hunting, etc.												
Wild and Scenic Rivers Hunting, hiking, fishing, boating, etc.												
National Recreation Areas Full spectrum of activities												
Backcountry, roadless, scenic, and dispersed recreation areas Nordic skiing, boating, hiking, wood gathering, berrying, etc.												
Driving for pleasure												
Facilities for dispersed area use Camping, boating, nature study, hunting, fishing, etc.												
Trails Hiking, horseback riding, bicycling, Nordic skiing												
Hunting and fishing												

Priorities for Recreation Efforts by the Forest Service

Areas, Facilities, and Activities	Allocation of National Forest lands	Development, opera- tion & maintenance	Research	Cooperative advice	Concessions on Na- tional Forest lands
Wilderness Hiking, boating, camping, fishing, hunting, etc.					
Wild and Scenic Rivers Hunting, hiking, fishing, boating, etc.					
National Recreation Areas Full spectrum of activities					
Backcountry, roadless, scenic, and dispersed recreation areas Nordic skiing, boating, hiking, wood gathering, berrying, etc.					
Driving for pleasure					
Facilities for dispersed area use Camping, boating, nature study, hunting, fishing, etc.					
Trails Hiking, horseback riding, bicycling, Nordic skiing					
Hunting and fishing					
Alpine skiing					
Interpretation of natural resources					
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Off-road vehicle facilities and activities Snowmobiling, motor biking, four-wheel driving					
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Destination campgrounds for external attractions					
Campgrounds for through travelers					
Urban recreation facilities					

Key:



Very high



High



Medium



Low



Very low

